

Abstract 499

TITLE: Interventions to Support Patient Adherence to H.A.A.R.T.

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ISSUE: There exists a great deal of evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of H.A.A.R.T. in HIV/AIDS patients. However, the benefits accrue only if medication is taken. The identification and removal of barriers to adherence with the medical regimen presents a challenge to all health care providers and a special opportunity for mental health providers.

SETTING: Palm Beach County Health Department HIV/AIDS clinics serve patients with broad social-economic, cultural and language differences in public health settings. Many patients, for a variety of reasons, are not adherent to H.A.A.R.T.

PROJECT: To increase adherence to H.A.A.R.T., medications regimens, additional resources were provided and changes in the patient flow were instituted to provide a comprehensive approach to provide patients with information and assist them in developing solutions to a variety of obstacles to adherence to H.A.A.R.T.

RESULTS: Patients were provided with a variety of interventions organized to reflect increased patient/provider interactions; nurse educators, nurse assistance with "pill boxes," social case management, and mental health intervention (including psychosocial evaluation and treatment). This triaged approach is expected to address the patient's needs as related to encouraging adherence.

LESSONS LEARNED: Each patient's need for intervention to increase adherence varies with the psychosocial situation of the individual patient. Interventions must be tailored on a case-by-case basis. The staged intervention system used at the Palm Beach County Health Department's clinics provides the necessary configuration of individualized services, which efficiently utilizes limited resources.

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